

**In the Specification**

Please amend the specification as follows:

**Page 1, lines 18 to 25**

"In an ATM network, calls are established between service endpoints over ATM virtual channel connections (VCCs). Individual VCCs may support calls by means of ATM Adaptation Layer Type One (AAL1), ATM Adaptation Layer Type Two (AAL2), ATM Adaptation Layer Type Three/Four (AAL3/4) or ATM Adaptation Layer Type Five (AAL5). In particular, the use of AAL2 is advantageous in situations where voice information is compressed/decompressed at the service endpoints. This results in short packets of information per voice call such that multiple voice calls can be multiplexed on to a single AAL2 VCC with concomitant savings in bandwidth."

**Page 2, lines 1 to 15**

"It will be appreciated that, before a connection request can be admitted to the network, an appropriate channel must first be allocated to the request. This is typically performed by a negotiation procedure between an originating and a terminating end point. Under ~~busy~~ certain conditions, it is possible for a channel selected for a call by one end point to be unacceptable to the other. Typically such a situation occurs when the particular channel that has been chosen does not terminate on an appropriate resource at the terminating endpoint that would allow the call request to be satisfactorily completed. In such circumstances the call set up procedure will have to be aborted, even if there exist other usable channels that terminate on a resource that would have permitted the call to be completed. This situation is defined as premature blocking. The volume of aborted call set up attempts resulting from premature blocking can represent a significant waste of the

network resources involved in the failed set up attempts as well as a loss of revenue to a network operator."

Page 8, line 30 to page 9, line 8

"Figure 3 shows the essential elements of an alternative embodiment and illustrates the arrangement for an example of load sharing at an AAL2 node 31 that terminates an AAL2 signalling channel for each AAL2 VCC. The AAL2 node 31 is shown to include a number of AAL2 port and switch modules 25, a central AAL2 switch 27 28, an AAL2 signalling server 37 per AAL2 module and a co-ordination and control element 38. The AAL2 modules each terminate a number of AAL2 VCCs 14 carrying user traffic. Each AAL2 signalling server handles the AAL2 signalling channels associated with the AAL2 VCCs terminated by a given AAL2 module. The co-ordination and control element 38 communicates with the AAL2 signalling servers 25 and with the central AAL2 switch 26 to control the switching of AAL2 connections in the node. Under the control of the signalling servers, the AAL2 port and switch modules 25 switch individual AAL2 connections between the AAL2 VCCs terminated by the modules and the available inputs and outputs on the central AAL2 switch 26. The central AAL2 switch then switches AAL2 connections between AAL2 modules, as instructed by the co-ordination and control element 38, according to the routing requirements of the individual calls."

Page 10, lines 20 to 32

"Thus, as shown in figure 4, the AAL2 service endpoint provides connections between fixed sets of ATM ports and given TDM routes. The adjacent AAL2 node 22 42 has only sufficient routing information to route the individual AAL2 connections to the AAL2 service endpoint. It is not able to discriminate between the different AAL2 VCCs as would be required in order to place an AAL2 connection on the VCC that terminates on the desired TDM route. However, the service endpoint does have

the routing knowledge to associate an incoming AAL2 VCC with an outgoing TDM route. For this purpose, the AAL2 signalling server 47 in the AAL2 service endpoint is able to negotiate with its peer (not shown) in the adjacent AAL2 node ~~22~~ 42. The aim of the negotiation is to ensure that new incoming AAL2 connections are associated with the appropriate AAL2 VCCs and hence, with the correct TDM routes. This requires that the AAL2 signalling server be able to request, on appropriate occasions, a different path identifier than the one contained in the initial ERQ signalling message."